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Reagan Directive on Secrecy Criticized by Ex-Carter Aide

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 13 — Lloyd Cutler, who was the senior White House counselor to President Carter, criticized the Reagan Administration today for seeking to censor books on national security by former policy-making officials of the Government.

Mr. Cutler, a prominent lawyer here, said that a recent order by President Reagan intended to stop disclosure of classified, or secret, information "does not strike a reasonable balance" between Government needs for secrecy and the right of officials to speak out.

Mr. Cutler's testimony ran contrary to that of representatives from the Justice, State and Defense Departments, and from the National Security Agency, before a Senate committee whose members expressed skepticism of Mr. Reagan's extensive efforts to clamp down on the release of Government information.

Mr. Cutler's criticisms were supported by Noel Gayler, a retired admiral and onetime head of the National Security Agency, responsible for signals intelligence, who contended that such controls should be applied selectively to protect sensitive information such as codes.

Support and Opposition

On the other side, William E. Colby, who said he had been on both sides of the issue as Director of Central Intelligence and then as an author subjected to Government censorship, urged "a clear criminal sanction for the unauthorized disclosure of classified information."

In addition, Prof. David Lykken of the University of Minnesota Medical School testified that polygraph, or lie

detector, tests proposed by the Administration were unreliable. He said they would not only threaten the careers of officials but also drive talented people from Government service.

The Government officials who testified today defended a Presidential order six months ago as necessary for national security and asserted that the use of polygraphs would be carefully regulated and not permitted to be the sole tool for investigations.

The order, National Security Decision Directive 84, would permit the Government to review written works by former officials before publication, to control contacts between officials and the press and to use polygraphs to investigate unauthorized disclosures.

Warning From Mathias

Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr., Republican of Maryland, opened the hearing before the Committee on Governmental Affairs by contending that the directive would consign senior Government officials "to a virtual vow of silence on some of the crucial issues facing our nation."

Mr. Mathias softened his criticism by adding, "I am confident that this chilling scenario, so antithetical to our most cherished values, is not what the President intended." He urged that the directive be clarified "so that these public servants need not forever fear that they speak or write on public affairs at their peril."

Mr. Cutler suggested that a distinction be drawn between producers of intelligence, such as officials of the C.I.A., and consumers of intelligence, such as Cabinet officers and other top Administration officials.